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masamune shirow's

ORION

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masamune shirow's

ORION

PART 4

STORY AND ART
masamune shirow

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and molly kiely

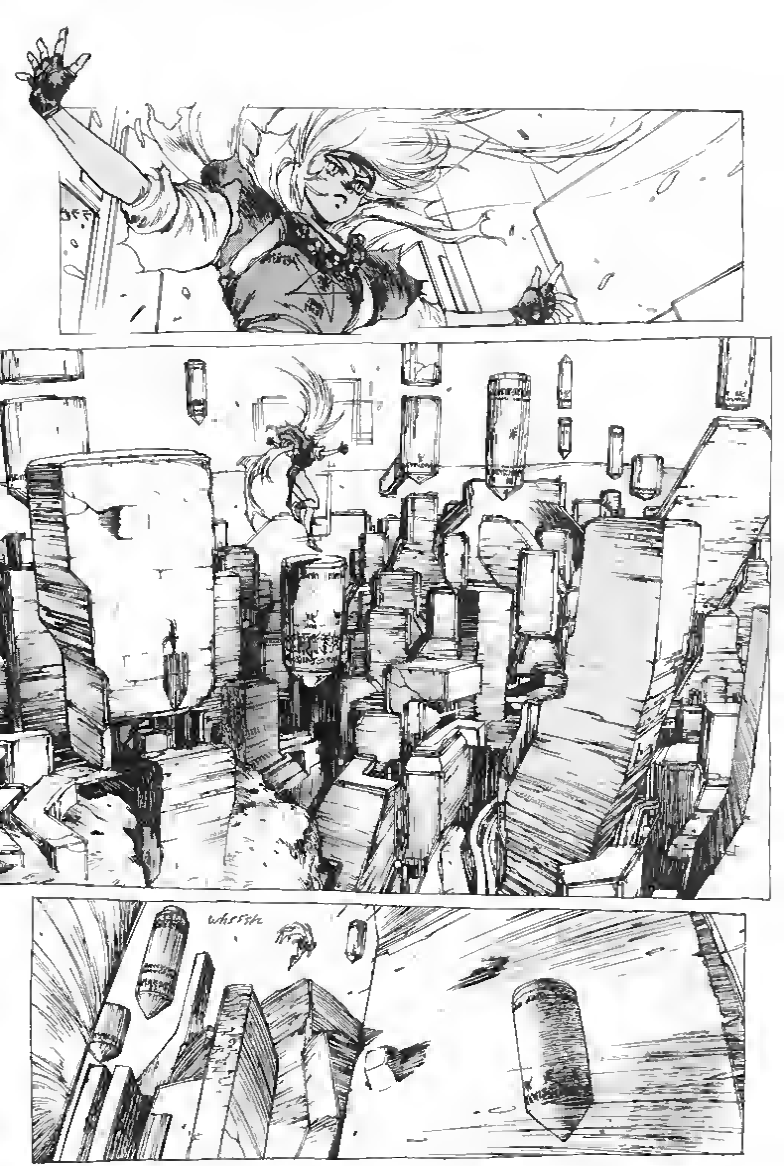
EDITOR
john weeks

IF I WORK AS AN ADVISOR TO THE IMPERIAL COURT AND PULL OFF SOME GREAT EXPLOIT, MAYBE THEY'LL MAKE ME A LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
SUBSPACE BOMBS FOR CENTERAL ARTILLERY
THEN RONNEL MIGHT TAKE ME SERIOUSLY ...
HEH HEH HEH
YE GODS! WHAT AM I THINKING?
BONK BONK
--IMAGINE A DEITY GOING BERSERK LIKE THAT!
PLEASE COMMANDER--FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, PUT YOUR PROTECTIVE GEAR ON!
?
SESKA ...?
QUICKLY, COMMANDER! THE SHOGUN'S WAITING!
?

WAAAA!
WHAK WHAK
I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF AGAIN! I'M SO EMBARRASSED!
SEEMS A LITTLE UNSTABLE NOW...
O GODDESS OF SPRING THOU WHO ART SUPPOSED TO PROTECT ME-- WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!
WAAAH!
NOW I'LL HAVE TO PULL OFF SOME SUPER-SPECTACULAR EXPLOIT, AND REMAKE MY IMAGE FROM SCRATCH!
FIRST I'VE GOT TO PURIFY MYSELF THEN I'LL FLY TO THE LIBRARY GET THE RED SEAL SCROLLS AND BRING SUSANO UNDER CONTROL LIKE DADDY SAID
KSSH!
HYAAA!
RIGHT! LET'S GO!!

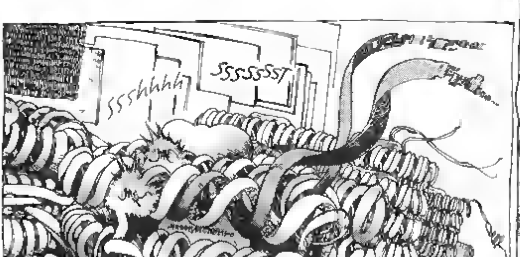
YOU STOP SUSANO, MEN!
Yo!
FZZKK
SHSSS
GULP!
STOP HIM? HOW?!
IN PSYCHO-SCIENCE TERMS IT'S SIMPLE USING A HEXALAYER POLARITY FIELD WE ENTRAP HALF OF SUSANO-- HIS ANTI-PARALLEL BIPOLAR PSYCHIC ELEMENTS
HE'S MADE OF COSMIC FACTORS...SO IF SOME HARMONICS FROM THE EARTH-COSMO CUSP ARE PROGRAMMED INTO THE FUSION EVEN LOW PSYCH-LEVEL VAJRA NAGA RITUALS SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE!

NOW I UNDERSTAND! IN THE TENDAI NAGA RITUALS, EVEN VAJRA ARHATS ARE TOTALLY CONTROLLED BY THE PSYCH-ELEMENT BIPOLAR MOMENT!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING HERCULEAN, SO IT CAN'T BE COMPLETELY NEUTRALIZED... BUT WHEN THE RIGHT HARMONICS ARE ADDED, EVEN VAJRA ARHATS CAN BE TRANSFORMED!
MAXIMUM TENDAI EQUALS MINIMUM VAJRA, AND VICE VERSA!
*POLARITY IN TH S CASE IS NOT NORTH AND SOUTH BUT YIN AND YANG
Kchak
Kchak
Kchak
Kchak
VREE
Kchak Kchak
VREE
Kchak Kchak


whoosh

AMAZING THE WAY THE SERAENO ARCHIVES HAVE EXPANDED
YOU'D THINK THEY COULD KEEP THEM A LITTLE MORE COMPACT
DAMNED LAZY LIBRARIANS !
LOOK AT THIS--THE NECRO-NOMICON ROSETTA'S BEEN DAMAGED
NOW WHERE ARE THOSE RED SEAL SCROLLS DADDY TALKED ABOUT ...?
WHO DARES TRESPASS IN MY ARCHIVES ?!
THUD
Ah HAH!
Uh-oh! HE'S GOT THE SCROLLS!

WELL, WELL! THUS MAY I SPEAK, AND SO YOU MUST ANSWER--
--WHAT IS THE SECRET NAGA FORCE OF THE YANG HAND ?!
FWAP
THE YANG HAND REVOLVES OUTWARD, THE YIN HAND RE-VOLVES INWARD
AIDED BY THE GOD OF ONENESS, A REVERSE OF THE PRAYER HANDS CREATES A DOUBLE SPIRAL AND COM-PRESSES THE HARMONICS
THE TAIL OF THE WEAVE IS THE YANG HAND, AND IT DRAWS THE YIN HAND TO IT
THE TINY NAGA SESKA HAS CREATED HAS A MIN MUM NAGA-FORCE (A HARMON C LEVEL) OF "I" IT D FFERS SLIGHTLY IN THE VAJRA NAGA RITUALS
GODS!
NOW WITNESS, AS I DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF THE SPELL!
FWAP!


SSSS

HELP!
DAMN IT! THIS IS BEGINNING TO PISS ME OFF!!
DOES THIS PLACE HAVE A NEVER-ENDING SUPPLY OF WEIRD STUFF!?
WHERE'S THE WEAVERY?
BKROM
KRAKOOM
KRAKOOM BANG

RMBRM
RMBBMB
RMB
RMB
HRMM!
WHAT SORT OF INFERNAL RAT-TRAP CUSP HAVE WE LANDED IN?
CHK
Soft soft
WHAT THE?!
FWO.
HSSHH
HSSHH

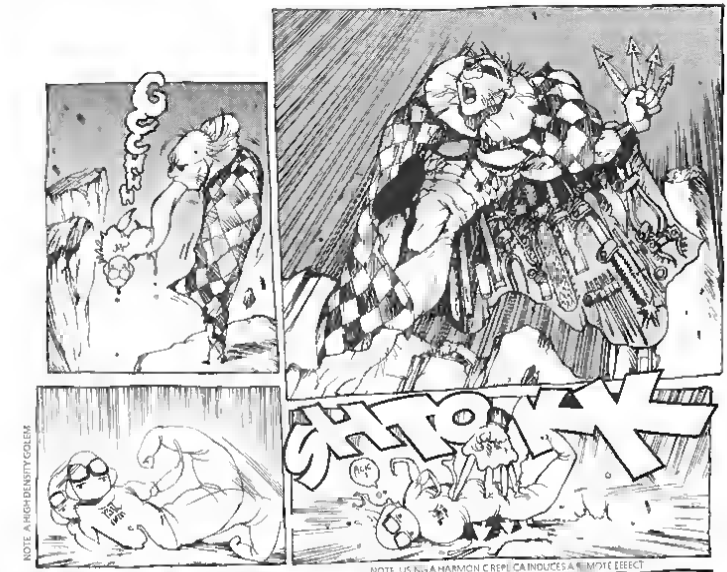
SKRAK
WHOOSSH
SHEEEE
WHOOSHAAA
O DEITY! AS DIRECTED UNDER THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHO-SCIENCE, WE, THE EIGHT WIZARDS FROM HELL, HAVE COME TO DESTROY YOU!

BWAHAHAHA
IGNORANT UPSTART SWINE!!
YOU'RE BEYOND REDEMPTION!!
SO LISTEN TO ME, AND LISTEN WELL!!
I CAN SMASH YOU ALL TO COSMIC DUST WITH BUT ONE WAVE OF MY SUPER-NATURAL SCEPTER!
I AM A LORD OF ALL BEINGS OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM-- I AM A MIGHTY POWER, A VAJRA ARHAT!!
PAMEN
I AM GREAT SUSANO, A GOD IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH!!
WARRIOR LORD OF THE BLACK DRAGON EYE AND OF THE REALM OF BEASTS!

FWHOOC
G-GODS ALOFT!!
OSH
HIS HARMONICS TEAR THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF!!
HE MUST BE STOPPED!!
OH, I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND TRYING
YOU MIGHT GET HURT, BOYS
SHASH
OMM
HYAAAHH!
UHRAM
GRAH!

IS *THIS* ALL THE HARMONIC FORCE THIS MEASLY PLANET CAN MUSTER AGAINST ME?
WHRAKOOM

WAHSHH
?!
CHOK
URK
KNCH
YA HA HA
YA!EE!
SWAKK
RIGHT-- WHO'S NEXT ?!


GRRRR
SHOOK
NOTE: A HIGH DENSITY GOLEM
NOTE: US NO A HARMON CREPE CA INDUCES A REMOTE EFFECT

FZZKK
EH
YE GODS!
AH HAH-- SO A RIFT DID APPEAR IN THE EARTH-COSMO CUSP RIGHT AFTER HE WAS PETRIFIED!
THAT MEANS WE CAN CONTROL THESE GODS WITH PSYCHO-SCIENCE!
HEAR ME, O EIGHT WIZARDS! ASSUME FORMATION AS I COMMAND!
THE GOD... WITH S WORLD ARE UA LIKE THOSE N CHRIST AN TY OR SLAM AND CLOSER TO A POWERFUL NATURE SP RIT OR W HATTHE ND AVIS CA LED A MANITOU T E R POWER IN HAB TS EVERYTH NC A NATUR

FIRST WE ACCESS THE PRANIC GATE-WAY, AND WHILE HE'S RESTORING HIS HARMONICS, WE'LL USE THE HARMONICS OF HIS NAME-CODE AND CLAMP A HEXARING ON HIM!
PREPARE THE HEXAPOLE SOLAR REACTOR!
Ehch hehheh HAH!
I KNOW THIS LL WORK!
I KNOW IT WILL!
"WHER-EVER A NAGA-FORCE EXISTS, SO DOES PSYCHO-SCIENCE!
SSSHHHH
?!!
"THIS TIME WE'LL SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO ABOUT PSYCH-ELEMENT ENGINEERING, SUSANO!"

IN ANTI-VAJRA FORCE?
THAT'S THE WAY!
I'LL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE MAN WHO MADE A DEITY'S HARMONIC CORE DIS-INTEGRATE!
SOMEONE'S ACCESSED MY NAME-CODE HARMONIC, AND IS TRYING TO PULL ME INTO A REACTOR?
CURSES! I SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD THEM MY TRUE NAME!!
FZZAKK
WHAT TH--?!

WH-
ZARK
AAK
DR. HEBIME! HAS HIS TOTAL HARMONIC CORE BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE REACTOR?
OPPOSITE POLES HAVE BEEN EXTRACTED FROM THE VIRTUAL VACUUM AND FORMED INTO A HARMONIC. NEARLY HALF THE PSYCH ELEMENTS IN THE REACTOR SHOULD HAVE FORMED A SPIRAL BY NOW!
??
QUICKLY! I WANT HIS HARMONIC CORE ANALYZED! ANY CHANGE PROVES HIS PSYCH-LEVEL HAS BEEN HALVED. AND IS NOW ONLY 490 MILLION!
REFERS TO THE VIRTUAL MAGNETIC CUTTING
A MAGNETIC FIELD ROLLS ON BETWEEN
AN ELECTRON AND A POSITRON. THE
HARMONIC IS EXTRACTED POLES (LIKE GENES).

HIS PSYCH-FIELD'S CONCEN-TRATING AND SEEKING A WAY OUT
IN 24 HAR-MONIC CYCLES THE HEXAPOLE SOLAR REACTOR WILL GO CRITICAL AND DESTRUCT !
I'M GOING TO ACTIVATE THE NINE-HEADED NAGA MYSELF!
THAT'S ALL I NEED !
DON'T LET THE WIZARDS RETREAT UNTIL I RETURN !
I'LL ACTIVATE IT WITH MY *OWN* HARMONIC !
HAH! *THAT'LL* SHOW THE FUZEN CLAN A THING OR TWO !
WHOO
WAKAWA

GYA HA HA!!
SO! EVEN GREAT WARRIOR DEITIES HAVE THEIR WEAK SPOTS!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK! IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR TO FIGHT YOU WITH ALL MY POWERS, SO I GAVE MYSELF A HANDICAP!
HAH!
YOU DON'T REALLY THINK YOU CAN REALLY AFFECT ME WITH A FOURTH LEVEL FORCE, DO YOU ?!
ENOUGH!
FZZAKK
HAIEE!
HRRG!
SHRAK
YEEEEK!

KRAWK
HA HA HA!
BOOM
RMBB
AIEEE!
KRAKK
EH?!

1 "HOW CRUEL!"
2 "WHAT AN ANNOYING FELLOW!"

FUZEN!
YOU STILL WITH ME?
BY A HAIR...
GOOD!
?!
...
THAT DAMN HEBIME! I BET HE'S GOT A DEFENSE SYSTEM OPERATING *HERE*, TOO!
THIS PSYCHO-SCIENCE STUFF IS MORE POWERFUL THAN I THOUGHT--FEELS LIKE FORCES FROM THE ORDINARY WORLD HAVE INFILTRATED NOT ONLY THE REALM OF THE DEITIES, BUT THE ELECTRONIC AND HARMONIC PLANES AS WELL!

Uh, SOMETHING'S LOOKING AT ME ...
REALLY? I'D SAY IT'S DOING MORE THAN JUST LOOKING.
EEYAAAGH!!
THUK
SIT!
SHAKE HANDS!
Good Boy!

ONCE THE PSYCHO-ELEMENTS START TO CONVERGE, THE HARMONICS ARE WEAKENED--BUT REMAINING--AND THEN THEY BUILD UP AGAIN...IT'S THE SAME WITH ME
WHAT YOU SAW WAS AN EXAMPLE OF EMOTIONS LIKE HATRED AND JEALOUSY BEING USED TO PUT A SPELL IN A TANGIBLE FORM AND USE IT AS A TRAP
LOTS OF BAD KARMA, IN OTHER WORDS
IF ENOUGH OF THAT STUFF BUILDS UP, IT CAN CREATE A NINE-HEADED NAGA
IT'S TRUE WITH EVERYTHING, BUT WHEN ANY ELEMENTS INCREASE TO A CERTAIN LEVEL, THEY TWIST IN ON THEMSELVES, SEEKING STABILITY
AND RIGHT NOW THE EVIL KARMA OF THE WORLD IS TRYING TO TRANSFORM INTO A NINE-HEADED NAGA THE NEGATIVE FORCES GENERATED BY EACH EVIL THOUGHT ARE TRYING TO FORM A NAGA AND STABILIZE
THAT'S WHY THE IDEA OF TRYING TO INCINERATE EVIL KARMA WITH A NAGA REACTOR IS A JOKE!
EVEN *THINKING* OF DOING IT IS A TYPE OF NEGATIVE KARMIC YEARNING
IF MERE MORTALS, WHO ARE RULED BY EVIL PASSIONS AND KARMA, COULD ACTUALLY DO WHAT ONLY BUDDHA DOES, WHY, I WOULD HAVE TRANSCENDED THE STATE OF THE SIX PATHS A LONG TIME AGO MYSELF. *
Hmph
SO THE DEMON IS BACK, EH ?!!
FWA!

* IN THE UNIVERSE "GOOD" REFERS TO A NETWORK THAT IS PART OF THE CYCLE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN THE HEAVENLY REALM OF THE SIX PATHS (THE SIX LOWER STATES OF EXISTENCE--HELL, THE REALMS OF HUNGRY SPIRITS, ANIMALS, ASURAS, MEN, AND CELESTIAL BEINGS). BUDDHA EXISTS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE SIX PATHS

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU I'M NOT A DEMON!
WHO WHO WHO
ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK YOU SAID THAT
tingg
ANY BEING--EVEN A DEITY--WHO THREATENS THE PRINCESS
--SHALL TASTE MY BLADE!
THIS OUGHT TO BE INTERESTING!
JUST TRY AND USE THAT THING ON ME!
WHAT
KAWAGG
HYAA!

FWAP
WHY THAT LOOKS LIKE TSUMUKARI, THE SWORD GOD!!
KRAAK
AAAH!

FIGURED I WOULDN'T ENCOUNTER ANYTHING MORE THAN 50,000 PSYCHES, AND HERE I AM--WITH A PSYCHO-SCIENCE SPELL PUT ON ME BY ORDINARY MORTALS!
HYAIEE
AA!
BKOOM
AH!
THE PRINCESS!

PRINCESS KUSHINATA! DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE NAGA FORCE!
CAN'T YOU SEE THE SOUND WITHOUT YOUR CRYSTAL EYE?
STOP! DON'T ACTIVATE THE NAGA!
PRIN-CESS!!
PRIN-CESS!!

KA-
-AK
NYA HA HEH!
MANIFEST O NAGA REACTOR!
DEVOUR THE WORLD'S BAD KARMA JUST AS THE FILTH-EATERS CONSUME FILTH!

WHIPSSH!
SKRAK
WHERE'D THE WIZARDS GO?!
COWARDS!!
WHA--?
Central Altar
Central Altar

O NAGAS! MANIFEST AND PURIFY THIS WORLD!
FLIK-FLIK
AA!
KRAM

KRAK
!
PRIN-
CESS
...
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
A
NAGA
?!
WE BETTER
GET OUT OF
HERE, OR
THE NINE-
HEADED
NAGA'LL
EAT US
ALIVE!!
RMBB
RMB
RMBB
RMBB
RMB
RMB

SHOGUN, SIR! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING NEAR ONE OF THE PALACE TOWERS!
ALL AHEAD FULL! JUMP TROOPS AT THE READY! WE'RE GOING IN TO RESCUE EMPEROR ZOKOKU!
HEGIME, SIR! WE'RE PROCESSING AT 62 HARMONICS-- THE OCTOPOLE REACTOR IS PROCEEDING AT 32!
HEY, MON WHAT DAT HOLE IN DE REACTOR VESSEL?
HUH? YOU BE WORRYIN', MON!
EXCELLENT! WHEN WE REACH 80 WE'LL ACTIVATE THE WHOLE SYSTEM REACTOR AND THE FIRST THING WE'LL DO IS FRY SUSANO!
VRRAAVRRNNVRRMM
VRRM

SAKURA! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY!
IT'S OVER
LET'S GO, THEN
...BACK TO PLANET DAION, AND REJOIN OUR MASTER
HEY, WE BETTER REUNITE!
NO TIME NOW!
YOU TAKE FUZEN WITH YOU! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS CUSP WORLD!
HURRY!!
Uh, sir
TWO PSYCHO-MASSES STARBOARD, AFT OF US NOT BEARING THE SIGN OF YAMATA! I'VE GOT A FIX ON 'EM!

I CAN'T READ THEIR HARMONICS, SIR!
I WANT ALL OUR VILLICANNON TRAINED ON THEM! DESTROY THEM!
FIRE!
BKOOOM
SKRSHH
HNGG!
OW OW OW!
HEY! DON'T JUST STAND THERE! WE'VE GOTTA GET TO THE VAJRA INTERFACE!
I'M GETTING IN TOUCH WITH MY PAIN, BOZO!
YOU WANT PAIN?! I'LL GIVE YOU AS MUCH AS YOU WANT!
SOME OF OUR PSYCHO CIRCUITS ARE LEAKING, SIR!
READINGS UNCLEAR!
THE HARMONIC MASS IN FRONT OF US HAS INCREASED A WHOLE OCTAVE!
COMMANDER RONNEL! PREPARE YOUR TROOPERS FOR IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT!

REFERS TO [illegible] ERFACE BETWEEN A PLANET'S MAGNAFORCE AND THAT OF THE HEAVENS. THIS CASE THE INTERFACE REFERRED TO IS THE AREA WHERE SOLAR WINDS AND EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD COLLIDE IN THE SUNWARD SIDE OF EARTH

RMBRMB
BRMB
EVEN WITH A ZERO PSYCH-LEVEL ITS HARMONIC FORCE IS *INCREDIBLE!* THE REACTOR IS BUILDING MASS!
WHAT THE HELL ARE THE GODS OF THIS PLANET *DOING*?
BKOOM
BOOM
WHAT THE HECK?!
SEE, STUPID? THEY'RE SELF-DESTRUCTING 'CAUSE YOU MADE 'EM LOSE FACE!
SO YOU'RE STILL AROUND, EH?

I'VE LINKED US UP TO TAKAMAGA-HARA! *
HAH! WELL DONE IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!
WE'D BETTER CONNECT WITH AMATERASU* AND FRY THE NAGAS BEFORE THEY ACTIVATE AND START COLLECTING THE NEGATIVE KARMA...
* IN THIS CASE THE UNIVERSE OR THE SOLAR SYSTEM
HA HA
NOT SO FAST THERE!
FZKK
?!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
O SUSANO, GOD OF DARK-NESS!
I'VE COME TO TEACH YOU A LESSON OR TWO!
TO BE CONTINUED